

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 ACDA-12 /101 W
-----124274 261054Z /11

R 261041Z MAY 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2234
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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 11817

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652:GDS
TAGS: CH, UR, PEPR, PBOR
SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER ON SINO-SOVIET
RELATIONS AND INTERNAL PRC POLITICAL SCENE

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER DISCUSSES 1950
SINO-SOVIET TREATY AS RENEWAL DEADLINE FOR TREATY
APPROACHES; REPEATS SOVIET INTERPRETATIONS OF MAY 9 BORD
INCIDENT AND CHINESE INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE AND AVOIDS
EXPRESSING OPTIMISM ON PROSPECTS FOR CURRENT SINO-
SOVIET BORDER TALKS. END SUMMARY.

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1. EMBOFF CALLED ON SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER KRYUKOV
ON MAY 24. KRYUKOV'S REMARKS ON SINO-U.S. RELATIONS,
BRZEZINSKI VISIT TO CHINA AND ARMS SALES TO CHINA HAVE
BEEN REPORTED SEPTEL.

2. SINO-SOVIET TREATY: EMBOFF ASKED KRYUKOV IF HE
THOUGHT EITHER THE SOVIET UNION OR CHINA WOULD TERMINATE

SINO-SOVIET 1950 TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, ALLIANCE, AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE BEFORE THE FEBRUARY 14, 1979 DEADLINE. (NOTE: ARTICLE VI OF 1950 TREATY STATES THAT TREATY WILL REMAIN IN FORCE FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE YEARS PROVIDED NEITHER PARTY GIVES NOTICE A YEAR BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF ITS THIRTY YEAR TERM (EG. FEBRUARY 14, 1980) OF ITS INTENTION TO DENOUNCE THE TREATY. END NOTE). AT FIRST RESPONDING THAT "YOU KNOW THE ACTUAL STATE OF OUR RELATIONS," KRYUKOV SAID THAT IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THE TREATY WILL BE DENOUNCED. HE THEN COMMENTED THAT THE TREATY HAD PROVEN USEFUL AS AN UMBRELLA FOR A WIDE RANGE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA IN THE PAST AND THAT IT IS STILL USEFUL FOR THE CHINESE AND SOVIET "PEOPLES" (COMMENT: WE HESITATE TO PREDICT ACTUAL SOVIET THINKING ON THIS QUESTION. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE CONTINUATION OF THE TREATY OR EITHER SIDE'S DENUNCIATION OF IT WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT ACT, EVEN IF ONLY A SYMBOLIC ONE. END COMMENT.)

3. MAY 9 BORDER INCIDENT: KRYUKOV REPEATED THE SOVIET VERSION CARRIED IN TASS STATEMENT. HE SAID THAT APOLOGIES HAD BEEN RENDERED AT THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS AS WELL AS THROUGH "DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS." HE EXPRESSED REGRET -- BUT DID NOT SEEM SURPRISED -- AT PEKING'S MOVES TO KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE.
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4. IL'ICHEV TALKS IN PEKING: KRYUKOV EXPRESSED NO OPTIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR THE CURRENT SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS. HE POINTED TO HUA KUO-FENG'S UNYIELDING STATEMENTS ON THE BORDER AT THE NATIONAL PEOPLES COUNCIL MEETING. HE REPEATED OFT MADE SOVIET COMPARISON OF PAST US-CHINESE WARSAW TALKS AND SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS AS CONTINUALLY RECESSING BUT NEVER TERMINATING. ASKED HOW LONG IL'ICHEV WOULD REMAIN IN PEKING, HE RESPONDED THAT THE PRESENT PEKING TALKS HAVE NO TIMEFRAME BUT ADDED THAT IL'ICHEV HAS MANY RESPONSIBILITIES IN MFA WHICH WOULD DRAW HIM BACK TO MOSCOW. (COMMENT ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES HERE, IL'ICHEV HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY OCCUPIED WITH AFRICAN AFFAIRS AND WOULD INDEED HAVE CONSIDERABLE WORK PILING UP ON HIS DESK IN MOSCOW. AS REPORTED EARLIER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT IL'ICHEV ANTICIPATED ANY PROGRESS IN THE BORDER TALKS WHEN HE LEFT MOSCOW LAST APRIL. HIS VISIT VERY LIKELY HAD OTHER OBJECTIVES OUTLINED MOSCOW 8967 AND MOSCOW 9488. END COMMENT.)

5. CHINESE INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE: KRYUKOV GENERALLY

REPEATED THE SOVIET INTERPRETATION THAT INSTABILITY CONTINUES TO PLAGUE CHINESE AT BOTH THE CENTER AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS. COMPETITION IS ESSENTIALLY BETWEEN THOSE WHO ROSE DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION LED BY HUA KUO-FENG AND THOSE WHO SUFFERED FROM IT, REPRESENTED BY TENG HSIAO-PING. OF THE TWO, HUA IS BY FAR THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY SO AS TENG AGES. DIFFERENT CHINESE NEWSPAPERS CONTROLLED BY DIFFERENT FACTIONS TAKE CONFLICTING POSITIONS ON MAJOR ISSUES. REGIONAL STRONGMEN LIKE WEI KUO-CHING SOMETIMES DEPART

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FROM PEKING'S INSTRUCTIONS. THE "STRUGGLE" (BORBA) IS CONTINUING, HE CONTINUED, AND WILL PROBABLY BE REFLECTED IN MORE REASSIGNMENTS INTO AND OUT OF THE POLITBURO. KRYUKOV ALSO PREDICTED THAT THE ANTICIPATED FAILURE OF THE NEW CHINESE LEADERSHIP TO ACCOMPLISH THE OVERLY-AMBITIOUS ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES SET AT THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS BODES ILL FOR POLITICAL STABILITY IN CHINA. (COMMENT: IT IS OF COURSE IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW THE EXTENT TO WHICH KRYUKOV IS EXPRESSING A GENUINE SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF THE CHINESE POLITICAL SCENE.

SOVIETS OCCASIONALLY EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE POLITICAL
INSTABILITY IN CHINA REFLECTS A FLUIDITY WHICH COULD
EVENTUALLY LEAD TO POLICY CHANGES, INCLUDING THOSE IN
THE AREA OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THEY UNDOUBTEDLY
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HOPE THAT INSTABILITY WOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO SERVE
TO RETARD CHINA'S AMBITIOUS MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS.
END COMMENT.) MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ARMS, SALES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW11817
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780222-0947
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780514/aaaaaltj.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2551166
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND INTERNAL PRC POLITICAL SCENE SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER DISCUSSES
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, CH, UR, US
To: STATE HONG KONG
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7cdbb695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014